DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 076 696 TM 002 705

AUTHOR	Rosenshine, Barak; And Others
TITLE	Correlates of Student Preference Ratings.
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	11p.; Paper presented at annual meeting of American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, Louisiana, February 25-March 1, 1973)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Course Evaluation; *Data Analysis; Demography; Predictor Variables; *Student Opinion; Tables (Data); *Teacher Rating; Technical Reports
IDENTIFIERS	Course Evaluation Questionnaire

ABSTRACT

Analysis of student responses in 1,200 undergraduate classes to a 40 item Course Evaluation Questionnaire yielded the following results. None of the eight demographic variables correlated .2 or higher with any of 30 items on course and instructor. Variables correlating .4 or higher with five preference criteria were: clarity of instructor's presentation, value of class, interest of subject matter, and instructor's emphasis of student enjoyment of course. Variables correlating negligibly (.2 or lower) with all criteria were: teacher lecturing, independent papers, class participation, and application necessary for final exam. (Author)

FORM 510

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

NOV. 1972

ED 076696

TM 002 206

CORRELATES OF STUDENT PREFERENCE RATINGS[1]

Barak Rosenshine
University of Illinois at Urbana
Alan Cohen
and
Norma Furst
Temple University

The purpose of this study was to analyze the data from a student evaluation survey of courses and instructors in order to determine whether certain demographic variables were related to student ratings of courses or instructors, and which rating variables were related to certain "preference criteria."

The 40-item "Course Evaluation Survey" was administered to students in 1200 daytime, on-campus, undergraduate classes in all the colleges and schools of Temple University in Spring, 1970. The questionnaire items were drawn from existing instruments. The first seven items on the survey were demographic variables (e.g., marital status, grade point average, expected grade, sex, number of previous courses in this field), which were included in order to determine whether ratings of the course or the instructor were differentially associated with these variables. The content of the remaining 31 items, each on a four-point scale, ranged from fairly specific descriptions of the course or the instructor to global evaluations.

Procedure

Five global items were selected as "preference criteria" for this study because they were the items of greatest interest to students and faculty in the Course Evaluation Survey (1970), and because the items were similar to

preference criteria used in other studies (Costin, Greenough, Menges, 1971). These items were: compare this instructor to your other college instructors, would you recommend this instructor to a friend, compare this course to your other college courses, would you recommend this course to a friend, and was this course worthwhile to attend.

The intercorrelations among the five preference criteria ranged from .48 to .73 (Table 1), indicating the criteria were measuring the same thing

---

Insert Table 1 about here

---

to some extent, but the intercorrelations were not high enough to warrant selecting only one preference criterion. For brevity, the two most redundant criteria were deleted from the rest of this article ("Would you recommend this instructor to a friend," "Would you recommend this course to a friend"). The results with three preference criteria were the same as they would have been with five preference criteria.

Class mean scores on each of the demographic variables and each of the 26 remaining descriptive variables were then correlated with class mean scores on each of the preference criteria.

Results

Seven demographic variables were included in the survey: year in school, grade point average, expected grade in the course, sex, age, number of previous courses in this field, and marital status. The correlations between each of the demographic variables and each of the preference criteria are presented in Table 2. None of these variables had correlations above .2 with

---

Insert Table 2 about here

---

the subsequent ratings, and most of the correlations were .1 or less. Levels of significance are not very meaningful because for a sample larger than 1,000, a correlation of .06 is significant at the five percent level. Yet, two results in this table are of interest. First, those who expected a higher grade in the course tended to give more favorable ratings on the preference criteria (rs = .09 to .27). Second, there was a tendency for more experienced students (those who were older, had more courses in the field, were upper-classmen, were married) to give higher ratings, although only one of those correlations was as high as .10.

The correlations between each of the descriptive items and the preference criteria are presented in Table 3. The table is divided into three

---

Insert Table 3 about here

---

parts according to the strength of the relationships between the descriptive items and the preference criteria. The strongest correlates, those items which had a correlation of .5 or higher with two or more of the preference criteria, are in the first section. The moderate predictors are in the second part. The lowest predictors, those items which yielded an average correlation of .2 with the five criteria, are in the third part.

Discussion

The lack of any meaningful correlations between the demographic variables used in this study and the five preference criteria cross-validates results obtained in other studies of this type. The results of this study add strength to the generalization that these variable have relatively little influence on class mean student ratings. (For a review of additional studies employing demographic variables see Costin, Greenough, and Menges, 1971.)

Three of the highest correlations in this study are comparable to those obtained in other studies. In their review, Costin, Greenough, and Menges (1971) cited the variables which had the highest correlations with student preference criteria in 10 additional studies. Four variables appeared in at least six of the ten studies: clarity or organization of class, teacher enthusiasm or interest in the material, whether the teacher stimulated student curiosity or interest, and whether the teacher was well prepared or knew the subject. The first three of these variables are also among the variables which had high correlations with student preference criteria in this study. The fourth, teacher knowledge of course material, appeared among the moderate correlates in this study.

The overall results in this study are comparable to the results obtained in studies in which similar descriptive variables were correlated with student achievement. In reviews of studies on descriptive variables and student achievement (Rosenshine, 1971; Rosenshine & Furst, 1971), variables such as teacher clarity and teacher enthusiasm were consistently, significantly related to student achievement, and variables such as student participation or teacher lecturing were not significantly related to student achievement. However, it would be unwise to extrapolate from this finding and use student preference ratings as "proxy variables" for student achievement, at this time. Rather, investigators who use student questionnaires to determine correlates of student achievement are advised to include a number of global student preference measures such as the ones used in this study.

The most interesting findings in this study are the variables which had the lowest correlations with student preference criteria: teacher lecturing, willingness to meet students outside class, criticism of students in a destructive way, importance of class participation for the final grade, whether

interpretation of ideas was important for the final grade and whether criticism of papers was helpful. Although these last variables are frequently cited as being "obviously important" for college teaching, their importance is not borne out by these data. Similarly, equally obvious variables such as instructor encouraged discussion, instructor encouraged creativity, and instructor handled course in innovative ways had only moderate correlations (.2 to .3) with the preference criteria.[2]

In contrast to the low correlations on the variables above, the students in the 1200 classes in this sample believed that "good teaching" is most strongly associated with clarity of presentation, continuity of course organization, instructor enthusiasm, and a feeling that they learned something.

References

Cohen, A. (Ed.) The course evaluation survey. Philadelphia, Pa.: The Student Senate of Temple University, 1970.

Costin, F., Greenough, W. T., & Menges, R. J. Student ratings of college teaching: Reliability, validity, and usefulness. Review of Educational Research, 1971, 41, 511-535.

Rosenshine, B. Teaching behaviours and student achievement: IEA studies No. 1. New York: Humanities Press, 1971.

Rosenshine, B., & Furst, N. Research on teacher performance criteria. In B. O. Smith (Ed.), Research in teacher education. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1971.

Footnotes

[1]This article was written while all three authors were at Temple University.

[2]Four additional variables also had low correlations with the preference criteria. These were items on whether (a) independent projects and papers, (b) class participation, (c) creative thinking, or (d) interpretation and application were important for the final grade. These items may be inappropriate in a study of this type because the questionnaire is usually administered before the final grade is received. In addition, anecdotal information indicated that students paid little attention to these four items when using the published printouts to select instructors for future courses.

Table 1

Intercorrelations Among Five Preference Criteria

	16 Compare instructor	30 Recommend instructor	17 Compare course	31 Recommend course	2 Worthwhile to attend
16. Compare this instructor to your other college instructors.	---	.73	.64	.48	.68
30. Would you recommend this instructor to a friend?	.73	---	.60	.48	.62
17. Compare this course to your other college courses.	.64	.60	---	.64	.62
31. Would you recommend this course to a friend?	.48	.48	.64	---	.49
2. The class was worthwhile to attend.	.68	.62	.61	.49	---

Table 2

Correlations Between Demographic Variables and Preference Criteria

	Compare instructor	Compare course	Worthwhile to attend
Year in school[a]	.00	.06	.01
Grade point average[a]	.00	.02	.02
Expected grade[a]	.09	.27	.12
Age[a]	.06	.04	.07
Number of previous courses in this field[a]	.07	.10	.06
Sex[b]	-.10	.11	-.04
Marital status[c]	.04	.02	.02

[a]Students who were higher on these variables (e.g., older, higher GPA) tended to give more positive preference ratings.

[b]Scored as 1 for male and 2 for female, meaning that men gave higher ratings on "compare instructor" and "worthwhile to attend," and women gave higher ratings on "compare course."

[c]Single people tended to give higher ratings on the preference variables.

Table 3

Preference Criteria Correlated with Other Course and Instructor Behavioral Criteria

	16 Compare instructor	17 Compare course	2 Worthwhile to attend
High course and instructor correlations			
1. Instructor's presentation was clear and understandable.	.62	.53	.62
9. Instructor was enthusiastic.	.57	.43	.50
15. Overall development of course had continuity.	.52	.47	.52
18. Subject matter was interesting and stimulating.	.54	.69	.57
27. Rate how much you learned in this course.	.57	.66	.60
29. Instructor's main emphasis was on having students enjoy the course.	.50	.50	.43
Moderate course and instructor correlations			
4. Instructor encouraged discussion.	.32	.34	.26
8. Instructor encouraged creativity.	.45	.39	.37
10. Instructor was tolerant of other points of view.	.42	.34	.33
14. Grading in course was fair.	.46	.38	.37
11. Instructor knew course material.	.40	.29	.35
12. Instructor stimulated independent reading.	.43	.40	.37

Table 3 (continued)

	16 Compare instructor	17 Compare course	2 Worthwhile to attend
Moderate course and instructor correlations (cont'd.)			
13. Instructor handled course in innovative ways.	.43	.35	.31
19. Instructor's main emphasis was on student learning.	.40	.38	.41
Low course and instructor correlations			
3. Course conducted by lecturing.	-.08	-.09	.00
6. Instructor willing to meet with students outside class.	.26	.30	.25
7. Instructor criticized student responses in destructive way.	-.16	-.23	-.16
20. Instructor used assigned papers as an aid in learning.	.21	.15	.13
21. Criticism of papers was helpful to students.	.26	.17	.17

END

DEPT.OF HEALTH
EDUCATION AND
WELFARE
U.S. OFFICE OF
EDUCATION
ERIC
DATE FILMED

9 4 73